



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food and  
Consumer  
Service

Mountain  
Plains  
Region

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Reply to  
Attn of: SP 96-14

Subject: Donation of Leftover Food from School Cafeterias

To: STATE AGENCY DIRECTORS - Colorado ED, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri ED,  
(Child Nutrition Directors) Montana OPI; Nebraska ED, North Dakota,  
South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming ED

In response to recent inquiries received by our National Office, this memorandum repeats the Agency's policy with respect to the donation of leftover food by school cafeterias to organizations that feed the needy.

As you know, schools may claim reimbursement for only one lunch served per child per day, and schools are required to plan and prepare, based on participation trends, sufficient amounts of food to achieve this objective. When the amount of food actually prepared exceeds the amount needed for the reimbursable meal service, schools may dispose of the extra food as they wish as long as they comply with applicable State and local health standards. Thus, schools may donate leftover foods to appropriate nonprofit institutions such as soup kitchens or homeless shelters provided this practice is not prohibited by State or local laws or regulations.

We request that your Agency ensures that local schools are aware of this option.

Please contact our office if you have any questions.

*Ann C. De Groat*

ANN C. DEGROAT  
Regional Director  
Child Nutrition Programs